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BRENDA K. MONROE, *et al.*,
Petitioners,

v.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF JACKSON, TENNESSEE, etc.,
Respondents.

SUPPLEMENT TO APPENDIX TO RESPONDENTS' BRIEF

RUSSELL RICE, SR.,
215 East Main Street,
Jackson, Tennessee 38301,
Attorney for Respondents.

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THEY ARE NOT SO MUCH ANTI-NEGRO AS PRO-MIDDLE CLASS

By John Finley Scott and Lois Heyman Scott*

(from the New York "Times," March 24, 1968, page 46)

The record of programs for social reform shows, alas, frequent unintended and undesired results. Reformers are usually quite clear about the nature of the evil they want to end, much less clear about how to end it. One reason for this is the premise that an evil is always caused by another evil, never by anything good. But analysis usually shows that an evil condition is more complex than such a purely moral perspective implies. And this suggests that a simple cure will be unlikely and raises the further question of whether any cure will be worth its cost. Analysis of such social "evils" as illegitimacy, crime or social inequality shows each to be linked to other conditions, both good and evil.

In the 13 years since racial segregation *de jure* was outlawed by the Supreme Court, the problem of segregation *de facto* has proved stubborn and complex. Millions have been spent to integrate American schools, but the results so far are discouraging. Militant advocates now call for redoubled effort, and they are joined by the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders with its recent recommendations for "sharply increased efforts to eliminate *de facto* segregation in our schools." Yet in the present situation, plans to integrate schools are likely to fail in proportion to the resources marshaled behind them,

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*John Finley Scott, a professor of sociology at the University of Washington, is at work on a book, "The Prospect of College," to be published next year. His wife, Lois Heyman Scott, teaches in the department of urban planning at the university.

and to cause more segregation and worse education for subordinated racial groups than would otherwise occur.

The problem is that the evil of *de facto* segregation is sustained by a number of factors, at least one of which — parents' concern for what they judge to be the welfare of their children — is conventionally regarded as an important social good. Because programs for integration are part of a highly moral crusade, the implication of this parental concern is overlooked. But when it is analyzed in connection with other factors, it appears that the drive for rapid integration will fail, and that the means for improving education for black Americans within the context of *de facto* segregation deserve more attention. They deserve it not because they are more just, but because they are more likely to succeed.

Americans are racists. They persistently and invidiously distinguish among groups on the basis of genetic traits that evidently have nothing to recommend them except ready observability. American racism is, to be sure, relatively mild (especially compared to what it was in 1900) and highly variable within the society. But it is a widespread attitude and one that Americans share with most of the world's technologically advanced societies — including many that did not share in the Western European conquest of various nonwhite populations. No program for improving the lot of subordinated racial groups in America will succeed if it depends on the notion that racism is not a popular attitude but only the prejudice of a small and conspiratorial minority made up of Southern Senators, suburban school boards and metropolitan policemen. For the Senators voice the virulent racism of several million Southern whites, the school boards represent millions of white parents who fear

that integration will compromise their children's education, and the policemen nicely express the sentiments of the strongly rooted urban groups from which they are usually recruited.

The hope for more egalitarian race relations in this country rests more securely on the fact that American racism is qualified and limited. Americans who are racists in some areas will support racial equality in others. A man who opposes "open housing" legislation because he fears for his neighborhood may still support antidiscrimnnation measures in voting or employment. White voters have recently helped elect Chinese Senators and black mayors.

Most racial antipathy in America is not "pure" racism but derives from the disdain of higher classes for those below them. The tragedy of race in this country (and many others) is that visible genetic differences, superficial in themselves, have become generally reliable clues to a person's class position—his education, his income, his manners. The present low position of black Americans is a legacy of centuries of living under a most extreme and brutal form of slavery and of strenuous efforts since legal emancipation to contain them socially as a subordinated caste. Events of the last 20 years have done much to modify the legal and political aspects of this subordination, but the more general social effects of the past remain: black Americans are disadvantaged and poor, and their culture—so much a "culture of poverty"—is offensive to more affluent classes.

Advocates of integration frequently note that interracial contacts in housing and schools are less strained when both racial groups are reasonably well educated and "middle class," and they suggest that this provides the key to successful integration. But the number of middle-class blacks, though growing,

remains small, and as Christopher Jencks, of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, has pointed out, there just aren't enough of them to go round. Since the majority of whites today are broadly in the middle class, this means that most programs for quick integration by race must also involve integration by class. And the long-run problems of achieving genuine educational integration by class are vastly greater than those of genuine integration by race.

It is possible today to marshal evidence that racial attitudes are changing rapidly. But these are highly imperfect measures of behavior. It is the concrete action of white parents that will cause school-integration campaigns to succeed or fail, not what they say about the abstract rights of black Americans when their own interests are not at stake. People learn fashionable circumlocutions far faster than they change their habits. New York mothers exist who recite liberal platitudes in one breath and in the next declare that "New York City schools are simply impossible," which is why they are moving to Scarsdale. They remain tactfully vague about why the schools are impossible. In some respects racist sentiments may have hardened. Open-housing legislation, which not long ago had widespread support, is today something that few local candidates for public office can afford to endorse. Although the Senate has now included open-housing provisions in the new civil-rights bill, they are largely ineffectual or unenforceable for most housing, and the final legislation as it ultimately clears Congress probably will accomplish even less.

In the long run, American racism is probably waning. But the impatience of antiracists with ancient injustice, the penchant for provocative and dramatic confrontations — in education and elsewhere — may

ironically give the old myths of racism a new lease on life.

The special difficulty in programs for school integration is that they affect members of the dominant white group in a most sensitive part of their lives; that is, they affect the family, especially in its universal function of defining the social position of children. In Western societies all members of a family are commonly judged to occupy the same social class, regardless of age or sex. Parents desire to pass on to their children a status at least as good as their own. This makes the family the most conservative of all social institutions, the slowest to change in an otherwise rapidly changing society. In America today we may have parents who are liberals, yet a "liberal parent" is almost a contradiction in terms.

The behavior of professors as parents illustrates this well. Often strong advocates of equality, in the case of their own children they want what Everett Hughes, the Brandeis University sociologist, has called "equality—plus." They generally do what they can to give their children an elite education of the kind their own occupation requires, and this proves difficult in class-heterogeneous schools. Academic parents become distressed when sons learn hot-rod culture and neglect physics and English composition and when daughters threaten to marry angry young men who show no interest in college. The ideal is a small, homogeneous and "sophisticated" school, where liberal values are taught in the abstract, with exemplary but token integration of students and not enough real heterogeneity to interfere with the learning of skills essential to an educational elite.

American society, like all industrial societies, is rapidly changing, so that new opportunities for social advancement are constantly created and old elites

deposed. Social change is the greatest enemy of familial inheritance and increases the burden of parental responsibility. Thus families concentrate on providing their offspring with training that will give them an advantage in the otherwise relatively open competition for valued positions in society. This is why the class position of a child's family is such a good predictor of his score on any standard test of "educational achievement," as a recent United States Office of Education report by James Coleman entitled "Equality of Educational Opportunity," showed on a very large scale.

As competition for valued positions becomes more and more open, the selection of environments and schools that will aid in establishing status becomes more and more important. The middle-class white parent's fear of the impact of interracial contacts on his children's training does not depend simply on an unlettered racist belief that black children are "inherently" stupid or immoral, although this may play some part. He is fearful mainly because society is stratified because parents are anxious to pass on their stratified status, and because most black children are poor.

One good place to learn about the behaviour of Americans (rather than their verbal professions) in regard to integrated education is in the housing market. When we study attitudes we often end up recording platitudes. But in the housing market money does the talking. Money is very sincere, and a visit to a real-estate broker's office can be highly informative.

In the broker's office the walls are usually covered with maps. These show city streets, land-use zoning and school districts. Though many are colorful and expensively printed, they are not there because they are decorative. They are there because they provide needed information. The builder of speculative apartments, for example, wants to know where the zoning

law permits their construction; the parents of school-age children want to know the boundaries of "good" school districts.

Because such parents constitute the large majority of all buyers of single-family residences, the character of the school that serves a given residence becomes an important part of its value. This becomes quite clear after the most cursory interviews with real-estate brokers and a comparison of prices. As one broker we interviewed put it, "You don't just buy the house, you buy the school district." In cities with a Catholic school system, the broker will need two sets of school-district maps, public and parochial, for each map serves a different market. Houses that cannot be sold to Protestants because the public school has "too many" black students can still be sold to Catholics, who will send their children to the parochial schools. It is true that the church welcomes black Catholic children to its schools, and in some cases non-Catholic black children as well, but in most places there are very few of them to welcome.

Two cases illustrate the effect of school districts on white housing demand. In Seattle, residential districts are remarkably heterogeneous, mainly because of a complex geography that provides many lakefront and scenic sites. Some prime locations are in largely black school districts; others in white ones. Two areas belonging to a largely black school district contain well-sited middle-class houses, but prices for these are substantially lower than the prices of similarly sited houses in a third area where the lots are smaller and upwind from a garbage dump. The difference is that the third area belongs to a lily-white school district with (in the words of a district mother) "lots of children of professional people for our kids to associate with."

A recent proposal in Berkeley, Calif., to transport black children from "flat" to "hill" schools not only sparked a school-board recall campaign but noticeably softened the demand for residential property in the "Berkeley hills"—the home of most of the conspicuously liberal faculty of the University of California. Across the municipal (and school district) border in El Cerrito, in similar locations, there was no softening of demand. El Cerrito has the advantage for anxious white parents of being "all hill" and "no flat." Most of its homes are priced beyond the financial capacity of black parents.

The amount that white buyers will discount otherwise attractive houses in "polluted" public school districts tends to be limited by the cost of alternate private-school tuition for their children. This pattern is well-established in neighborhoods of expensive older homes in Eastern cities and is very clear in New York City's tight housing market. In Seattle one of the highest-income residential areas is near the most integrated public high school, but its affluent parents send their children to conveniently situated (and thriving) private schools.

Residential segregation is linked to school segregation through the "neighborhood school." Before educational policy became preoccupied with integration, the system of neighborhood schools eliminated the problem of transportation. With schools widely dispersed, children could get to them by walking short distances. It was, and is, a practical arrangement, economical for schools and popular with parents, quite apart from the fact that neighborhood schools reinforce the class system.

Because of its key role in *de facto* segregation, militant integrationists have attacked the neighborhood-school concept and have discovered that it com-

mands widespread social support. For one thing, integrationists have tended to assume that segregated neighborhoods produce segregated schools. But in view of the strong white demand for status-reinforcing schools, it is also true that segregated schools produce segregated neighborhoods, not because black families are simply barred by covenants from buying in certain neighborhoods (although they certainly were barred in many cases until 1948, when the Supreme Court nullified racially restrictive covenants to property titles), but because demand by the vastly more affluent whites bids up prices in many areas beyond what all but a tiny minority of blacks can pay. Insofar as white parents have made substantial investments in property partly because they presumed their children would attend a particular school, they are disposed to defend existing arrangements with political craft and power.

Changing the distribution of students among schools has proved to be difficult enough within individual school districts and municipal jurisdictions. It is much harder when whole school districts become the units of segregation, as they are indeed becoming in many metropolitan areas composed of white suburbs and a largely black central city.

Often the suburbs are Balkanized into a patchwork of small municipal governments, each jealous of its petty sovereignty, proud of its middle-class residential character, resistant to involvement in problems affecting the metropolitan area as a whole. This resistance is widely regarded as a major problem of American government, and if those who recommend interdistrict integration are to succeed, they will have to overcome it where many far less controversial programs have failed. Where concrete proposals for merging metropolitan and suburban school districts or for

busing more than token numbers of black children have been presented to the suburbs—in St. Louis and elsewhere — they have been resoundingly rejected.

Most advocates of integration have recognized the difficulty of getting effective governmental support at the local level, and they now place more hope in national programs. These are often administered by persons committed to integration, and their discretion in granting Federal funds constitutes a potentially powerful sanction. But so far Federal agencies are long on plans, "pilot studies," "demonstration projects" and speeches that will inspire disheartened integrationists to further effort — and short on tangible results. Why has so little been done?

One reason is that Federal agencies are accountable to elected officials, who, in turn, are accountable to the electorate, and the electorate is not particularly keen on school integration. An instructive case was the attempt in 1965 by Francis Keppel, then United States Commissioner of Education, to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting disbursement of Federal funds where state and local agencies practiced discrimination in their use. Funds were withheld from the Chicago schools after a redrawing of school district lines increased segregation. In response, Benjamin Willis, the Chicago superintendent of schools, decried Keppel's move as an attack on the "neighborhood school" and local control of education. Meanwhile, the engines of political influence began to turn, and Chicago got its money about two months later. The combination of factors that operated in the Chicago case may not be present elsewhere. But it is understandable if Federal administrators grow cautious after a few episodes of this nature. Much of their apparent discretion in the exercise of Federal sanctions really resides with the people who

appoint them or vote them funds, and these people in turn must stand periodically for election. Many Congressmen from Chicago came strongly to Willis's defense in 1965.

Most arguments for large-scale school integration presume that white parents can be outmaneuvered by paired schools, "educational parks" and squadrons of school buses. But this presumption is unrealistic, for it is the parents rather than the schools that have the greater strategic flexibility. Whatever strategy of integration confronts white parents, they will calculate an effective defense against it — a defense that may not be carried out (because their racism is not unlimited, and because any defensive strategy will have manifold costs and effects), but that many of them have the means to implement whenever they judge integration to constitute a sufficient peril for the welfare of their children.

The whites' main defense against integration is to move, and the general movement is to the suburbs. The desire to avoid racial integration is not the only motive for suburban living. A desire for newer houses or for "rural life" (at least till the next subdivision is built) doubtless plays a part. In America the rich have been abandoning the central city to poorer newcomers for generations, and the current flight to the suburbs, powerfully stimulated by Federal subsidies to housing and highways, merely continues an old trend. But the racial integration of schools does seem to produce short-run accelerations. In the last 15 years more than 215,000 whites have left Washington, D. C. But 40 per cent of them left in the three years following the desegregation of Washington's public schools in 1954, and today 91 per cent of the city's public-school students are black.

Most people who move from a given central city to its suburbs are members of a family with school-age children, while the whites who remain in or move back to the city are disproportionately single, childless or old. By selecting among the wide range of suburbs available, the prospective buyer can find a neighborhood at the limit of his ability to pay, suitable to his aspirations and remarkably free from contaminating heterogeneity.

Because suburbs are so well adapted to the maintenance of class distinctions, they are ill-adapted to many other activities (which accounts for the continued attraction of central cities for the childless), and they are usually expensive. Commuting costs, in money and time, are dear. Property taxes are high (no contaminating industry to bear the bulk of the tax load), but these go mainly to support a school system equal to parents' expectations. The popularity of suburbs with parents shows that they are generally willing to pay the costs involved.

Many of the people who remain in the city do so because they are too involved to leave. They include those who work for municipal agencies (which often require local residence), those enmeshed in a web of neighborhood kinship, those with incomes so low or families so large that they cannot raise the cash for a newer house in the suburbs, and those with strong roots in an ethnic community or parish. All these qualifications apply well to urban Catholics. Recent events in Boston, Milwaukee and Chicago suggest that they are the most vocal (and sometimes violent) opponents of neighborhood and school integration, but this is not necessarily because their racist sentiments are stronger than those of Protestants and Jews who leave the city. The latter tactfully bury their racism in a multiplicity

of "other reasons" for moving; only the immobile Catholics are left to stand and fight.

In a study of the political supporters of Louise Day Hicks, the Boston School Committee's champion of the neighborhood school and *de facto* segregation, it was noted that those most likely to support integration are also least likely to expose their own families to it. The authors of the study observed that Mrs. Hicks had been roundly denounced by white liberals in the Boston area, but these critics lived in the suburbs and could not vote against her. Here lies the problem in trying to assess public support by verbal professions. The Boston liberals have given their most sincere judgment by the residential location of their own families: they have voted with their feet. White parents who eloquently profess liberal opinions in the abstract live in Boston's suburban Newton, in El Cerrito and Mercer Island, but, in the case of one's own children, who says parenthood says conservatism.

More than anything else, the response of large numbers of white parents who are anxious for their children is likely to confound attempts to integrate schools. Families can move across school-district and municipal boundaries far faster than integration plans can. Fathers can commute longer distances than school children can be bused. Sites for new schools can be "strategically chosen" (although sometimes so much controversy attends site selection that school districts simply stop building new schools), but by the time the school is built, the white exodus is well under way, and shortly after it opens the new school is as segregated as the one it was built to replace. Much the same is likely to prove true of the attempt to outflank parents with large-scale "educational parks." To keep up with the volatile white families, the buildings of the grand new park would have to be a fleet of house trailers.

When white parents withdraw their children from the central city, more is lost than students alone. With them go a significant source of tax revenue and, most important, community leadership in programs for good public education. The parents who typically provide this leadership campaign for bond issues, support good teachers and new programs, and generally exercise their influence in ways that will benefit all children in the schools. But they do this because they live in the community and because *their* children will benefit, too. American public education, with its exceptional degree of local control, offers as much as it does to the lower classes (when it offers them very much of anything) not because of a passion for equality among professional educators—whose "life adjustment" curriculum is perfectly compatible with a caste system—but because community elites with a vision of education as an agent of social improvement have sought to apply their own standards to communities as a whole. When these groups finally decide that community schools are "past redemption" and withdraw their support, they produce a situation that is well and truly past redemption.

There is more than a loss of leadership. All over the nation, communities that for decades have passed every proposed school bond issue are now defeating them, and new dissatisfactions triggered by integration campaigns are probably partly responsible. It is not always possible to remedy this situation by raising taxes on industry. Modern factories put as little as possible into unrecoverable investments in land and buildings in order to be free to move where over-all costs are lowest — which is not likely to be a central city with many poor school children and no middle class.

At this point integrationists again resort to the Federal Government. We hear that "Federal bread will feed the urban schools." Will it? Federal grants usually come as programs to which local agencies apply for funds. The Federal guidelines are complex, and preparing applications to comply with them becomes a specialized skill of its own. Just as rich universities hire the best specialists for this purpose, so do rich suburban school districts. An even greater advantage falls to rich districts through the common Federal practice of supplying "matching funds." In short, as more Federal money is allocated to education, there is good reason to predict that affluent white school districts will continue to get their share and a little more besides.

The Office of Education could attempt to counter this by special dispensations for "integrated" schools (which is coming to serve as a euphemism for "black") thus regressing to a racist criterion. But no Congress elected in the next decade or so is likely to pass effective legislation and funds for such a program. The sociologist Thomas Pettigrew, generally an advocate of school integration, has recently reviewed the provisions of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Schools Act and warned his fellow partisans that it contains little that can be used to further integration. Indeed, whatever the legislation, Federal and local education agencies must act within a narrow range of nice distinctions, because many programs to improve the education of black children involve the unequal allocation of resources to students on the basis of their race — the very policy that moved the Supreme Court to its historic decision in 1954.

Even if, against all odds, some strategy for integration of the public schools is devised from which whites cannot escape, there remains the alternative of

parochial and other private schools. Apart from differences due to over-all regional prosperity, American public education is by most measures worst where community elites have forsaken public schooling for their own children and sent them to private schools instead; best where most elite children attend public schools and private schools are uncommon. Anything that motivates prosperous white parents to withdraw support from public education and to transfer it to private agencies weakens education as a force for social mobility and thus favors a more rigid class system, the very system integrationists oppose.

All of these arguments depend, of course, on probabilities and debatable interpretations, and their conclusions are not inevitable. The racism of American whites may change, parents may lose interest in maintaining status, competition among urban governments may disappear, Congress may demand that the United States Office of Education and the Attorney General apply stronger sanctions for integration, white fathers may tire of commuting, public education may be Federalized and private schools outlawed. But it seems more realistic for those who hope to improve the educational opportunities of black children to abandon the premise that integration must come before all else.

The effort to redress racial wrongs can be applied in principle to many different areas of social life in practice it has concentrated on public-school integration. As Oscar Handlin, the Harvard historian, has remarked, "Because segregation enforced by law was long an instrument to oppress the Negro, integration became the primary objective of Americans concerned with equality." But this objective is a poor choice. So much energy has been put into the difficult pursuit of school integration that little remains to plan for more practical improvements within the framework of *de facto* segregation, which is likely to persist anyway.

The assumption is widespread that the only way to help black children is to put them in the same schools as whites. But cannot at least some of the presumed advantages of white schools be transferred — probably much faster than through militant integration? The President's Commission on Civil Disorders recommends this also in its call to "improve greatly the quality of ghetto education." Today many black slum schools are understaffed simply because teachers refuse regular assignments to them (often preferring the wider choice of schools available to substitutes). Premium pay for hazardous and extreme duty (which involves first admitting that it *is* hazardous and extreme duty) might help here. More use might be made of citywide schools with an elite curriculum and admission open competitively to all.

Although a metropolitan school district may have less money per student than suburban or private schools, it still has more in total, and some of its funds might be used to buy facilities and recruit personnel to attract white students. Special elite programs might be housed in ghetto schools. Some small degree of integration would result, with the white students attending the schools a few hours a week, and the programs would also be readily available to black students. High-school scholarships for the disadvantaged might induce some potential dropouts to stay in school who now have (at least in the short run) every economic reason to leave. Large cash prizes for the demonstration of reading ability in high school would be cheap compared with the later social costs of adult illiteracy.

The advocates of integration often appeal to impending crisis. We are told that the damage done to black children through segregation is so terrible and costly that any means of eliminating it is justified, and that rapid integration alone affords relief. But

there has always been much in social life that is terrible and tragic. Rational social action must derive not simply from moral outrage but also from possible means of redress. One might claim with equal fervor that the damage done to the minds and souls of middle-aged women because they have grown sexually unattractive to men is so terrible and costly that any means of eliminating it is justified; and that a redefinition by Federal fiat of nubile appeal alone affords relief. After all, notions of sexual attractiveness, like notions of racism, are mere cultural artifacts.

The facts are that short of truly dictatorial authority over the education of white children, we lack the means to produce widespread school integration so long as white parents do not favor it. This is not to deny that integration benefits black children, but to argue that a concentration on integration programs risks losing many of the more general benefits that public education — even segregated education — can provide for them. It is to be wished that more black children could be exposed to the opportunities of the middle-class world, but the more immediate and prior goal is that many more of them learn to read. Pressing on with integration against all odds may simply eviscerate the public schools and produce more illiterates among the urban poor.

It is still hard to argue against integration. For one thing, it puts one in the bad company of traditional racists. Most of integration's critics have been conservative but highly literate Southerners, who use a graceful homiletic style filled with obsolete references to "human nature" and parochial appeals to common sense. The integrationists thus have their reply cut out for them: they refute the tired old saws of prescientific racism with fresh new facts from modern social science. It thus becomes difficult to criticize integra-

tion without appearing to be unfashionably prescientific.

This essay must risk that appearance. Its object is not to profess what it is currently fashionable to profess, but to explain what moral men only want to condemn, and to predict what will happen as a result of what they propose to do now.